

RICHARD S. STORRS.

THE EARLY AMERICAN SPIRIT,
AND
THE GENESIS OF IT.





④

THE EARLY AMERICAN SPIRIT, AND
THE GENESIS OF IT.



THE EARLY AMERICAN SPIRIT,

AND

THE GENESIS OF IT.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE

NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

AT THE CELEBRATION OF ITS

SEVENTIETH ANNIVERSARY,

APRIL 15TH, 1875.

BY

RICHARD S. STORRS.

NEW YORK:

ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & COMPANY.

1875.

COPYRIGHT, 1875, BY
ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & Co.

973

5 t 72

NOTE.

In consequence of the length of the following Address, occasional sentences, with two or three entire paragraphs, were omitted at the time of its delivery. They are, however, retained in the printed pamphlet, as in some degree important to the exhibition of the subject.

727557



A D D R E S S .

MR. PRESIDENT: MEMBERS OF THE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY: LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN:

THE anniversary by which we are assembled marks the completion of the seventieth year of the useful life of this Society. It is an occasion of interest to all of us, if regarded only in this relation. There are some present who remember still the founders of the Society: Egbert Benson, its first President, John Pintard, Brockholst Livingston, Dr. John M. Mason, Drs. Samuel L. Mitchill and David Hosack, Rufus King, Samuel Bayard, Daniel D. Tompkins, DeWitt Clinton, and others whose names are less familiar. There are many present to whom are recalled memorable faces, by the names of those who in subsequent years received its honors, or shared its labors, who are not now among the living: John Jay, Albert Gallatin, John Duer, Dr. McVickar, Gulian Verplanck, Charles King, Dr. John W. Francis, William L. Stone, Edward Robinson, Luther Bradish, Romeyn Brodhead, Dr. De Witt.

All of us, who are of a studious habit, have enjoyed the labors and the influence of the Society, and have

Address.

been encouraged and quickened by it, as well as more directly aided, in the small excursions which we have made into the domain of historical knowledge.

It is a source, therefore, I am sure, of unfeigned satisfaction to all of us to be able this evening to congratulate the honored President of the Society, its officers, and its members, on the success which it has accomplished, and on the promise of increasing prosperity with which its future here salutes us. In its incorporeal and continuing life, it has the dignity of age, without its decays. Its seventy years have brought larger fame, ampler resources, wider responsibilities; but it has still the privilege of youth—the fair and far outlook of existence in its prime. It projects our thoughts, from this eminent anniversary, over the periods which it anticipates, as well as over that which it reviews; and we shall joyfully unite in the hope that its coming career may be only more full of gladness and growth than has been its past, and that its influence may constantly extend, as the years augment its possessions and its fame.

Such institutions are beneficent powers in civilization. Whatever transports us from the present to the past, from the near to the remote, widens the mind as well as instructs it; makes it capacious, and reflective; sets it free, in a relative independence of local impulse and of transient agitation; gives it, in a measure, a character cosmopolitan, and a culture universal. Whatever recalls to us eminent persons—their brilliant and

Usefulness of such Societies.

engaging parts, above all, their fortitude, wisdom, self-sacrifice—re-enforces our manhood, encourages our virtue, and makes us ashamed of our indolent self-indulgence, of our impatient and fitful habit.

A community like ours—restless, changeful, abounding in wealth, vehemently self-confident—especially needs such inspiring impressions from a more austere and temperate past. A Society which presents that, through libraries and lectures, is ethical, educational, and not merely ornamental. In larger proportions, with more copious ministry, it fulfils the office of the statue of Erasmus, standing always, with a book in its hand, in the market-place of Rotterdam, amid the intricate network of canals, and in the incessant roar of traffic. It materializes again the shadowy forms. It breathes upon communities, languid or luxurious, an ennobling force, from vanished actions and silent lips. Presenting, as to immediate vision, the patient and achieving years into whose conquests we have entered, it makes us aware of the duty which always matches our privilege, and of the judgment which coming time will strictly pronounce upon our era. It ministers to whatever most aspires in man, to whatever is worthiest in civilization. And so it concerns the public welfare that this Society should long fulfill its important office, while the city expands to wider splendor, and the years fly on with accelerating haste; that this anniversary should be one in a series, stretching forward beyond our life, beyond the life of those

Address.

who succeed us, while the country continues the inviting and affluent home of men.

But this anniversary is not the only one to which our thoughts are to-night directed. By the irresistible progress of time, we are set face to face with others which are at once to occur, the succession of which, during several years, is to make large claim upon our attention ; and these are anniversaries, in comparison with whose significance, and whose secular importance, the one which assembles us would lose its dignity if it were not itself associated with them.

History can but picture events; setting forth, in a measure, their causes and consequences, and indicating the varieties of action and of character which were involved in them. It is, as has been said, "the biography of communities." These Societies which promote historical studies have it for their function to collect the materials, cultivate the tastes, assist the minute and complex investigations, out of which comes the ultimate enlightening historical narrative. Their office is therefore subordinate and auxiliary, though quickening and fine. The office of the historians whom they instruct, is commemorative only, not creative. They are the heralds who marshal the procession, not the princely figures who walk in it. They exhibit actions which they did not perform, and describe events in producing which they had no part.

When, then, the events themselves are before us, the mere narrative of which the student writes and the

Another Anniversary.

library assists, our chief attention is challenged by them. Contemplating them, we lose sight, comparatively, of the instruments which had made their outline familiar, forgetting the processes before the vitality and the mass of the facts to which these had brought us. It is with us as with the traveler, who ceases to remember the ship which carried him across the seas, when he treads the streets of the distant town, watches its unfamiliar manners, hears the dissonance of its strange speech, and looks with a surprised delight on its religious or civil architecture. So we, in front of the great events, the signal actions, the mean or the illustrious characters, to which the historical narrative has borne us, forget for the time the narrative itself, or only remember the intellectual grace which moulded its lines, the strength of proof which confirmed its conclusions, the buoyant movement with which it bore us across intervening floods of time.

We stand, as a people, in the presence of a commanding Past, and shall continue so to do in succeeding years of our national experience. One centennial anniversary, dear to the thoughts of every lover of English eloquence and American liberty, has passed already ; and you will pardon me, perhaps, if I pause upon that, because it has suggested the theme on which I would offer some remarks.

It was just one hundred years ago, on the twenty-second of March last, that Edmund Burke delivered in the British Parliament that speech on "Concilia-

Address.

tion with the Colonies," which, of itself, would have assured the fame of any speaker. The profoundest political and legislative wisdom was presented in it with perspicuous clearness, and enforced with an eloquence which Burke himself never surpassed. In eager and majestic utterance, he recited the circumstances which had led him to seek, with impassioned ardor, to promote the reconciliation of the colonies to the Government of Great Britain; and to do this by repealing the acts of Parliament against which resistance had here been aroused, and by adjusting future legislation on the plan of getting an American revenue, as England had got its American empire, by securing to the colonies the ancient and inestimable English privileges.

The speech is, of course, familiar to you; yet a rapid indication of its compact and coercive argument may serve, perhaps, to revive it in your thoughts, as a couplet sometimes recalls a poem, as the touch of even an unskilful crayon may set before us the wide outreach of a landscape.

The circumstance to which he first referred, was the rapid increase of the colonial population; an increase so swift, and so continuing, that, in his own words, "state the numbers as high as we will, whilst the dispute continues, the exaggeration ends. . . . Your children do not grow faster from infancy to manhood, than they [of the colonies] spread from families to communities, and from villages to nations."

The Oration of Burke.

The second circumstance which impressed his mind, was the commerce of the colonies: "out of all proportion, beyond the numbers of the people;" in respect to which "fiction lags after truth; invention is unfruitful, and imagination cold and barren." Of their expanding agriculture, he said: "For some time past the Old World has been fed from the New. The scarcity which you have felt would have been a desolating famine, if this child of your old age, with a true filial piety, with a Roman charity, had not put the full breast of its youthful exuberance to the mouth of its exhausted parent." Of the fisheries of the colonies, especially of the whale-fishery, he spoke in words whose fame is co-extensive with the English tongue, as carried to an extent beyond that reached by "the perseverance of Holland, the activity of France, or the dexterous and firm sagacity of English enterprise;" and this by a people "who are still, as it were, but in the gristle, and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood."

Still more important, however, before his view than either the increasing population of the colonies, their agriculture, or their commerce, was the temper and character of the people who composed them; in which a love of freedom appeared to him the predominating feature, distinguishing the whole. The people of the colonies were descendants of Englishmen. They were, therefore, "not only devoted to liberty, but to liberty according to English ideas;" and so they were

Address.

fundamentally opposed, with all the force of immemo-
rial tradition, to that taxation without representation,
against which the English lovers of freedom had al-
ways fought. Their popular form of government,
through provincial assemblies, contributed to foster
this attachment to liberty. Their religion gave to this
civil influence complete effect. "The people," he
said, "are Protestants; and of that kind which is the
most adverse to all implicit submission of mind and
opinion. . . . Their religion is a refinement on the
principle of resistance; it is the dissidence of dissent,
and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion."

If this were not strictly true in the southern colo-
nies, where the Church of England had wider estab-
lishment, yet the spirit of liberty was there only higher
and haughtier than in others, because they had a mul-
titude of slaves; and "where this is the case," he
affirmed, "in any part of the world, those who are
free, are by far the most proud and jealous of their free-
dom. . . . The haughtiness of domination com-
bines with the spirit of freedom, fortifies it, and renders
it invincible."

The education of the colonies, particularly the ex-
tent to which the study of the law was cultivated among
them, contributed to their untractable spirit. It led
them, not, "like more simple people, to judge of an ill
principle in government only by an actual grievance,"
but to "anticipate the evil, and judge of the pressure
of the grievance by the badness of the principle."

Burke's Conclusion as to the Colonies.

The last cause of the disobedient spirit in the colonies, to which he called the attention of Parliament, was "laid deep in the natural constitution of things"—in the remoteness of their situation; the three thousand miles of ocean forever intervening between England and them.

From all these sources, the ever-widening spirit of liberty had grown up in the colonies, now unalterable by any contrivance. "We cannot," he said, "we cannot, I fear, falsify the pedigree of this fierce people, and persuade them that they are not sprung from a nation in whose veins the blood of freedom circulates."

. . . I think it is nearly as little in our power to change their republican religion as their free descent; . . . and the education of the Americans is also on the same unalterable bottom with their religion;" while, if all these moral difficulties could be got over, "the ocean remains. You cannot pump this dry. And as long as it continues in its present bed, so long all the causes which weaken authority by distance will continue."

His inference from all was, that no way was open to the Government of Great Britain, but to "comply with the American spirit as necessary; or, if you please, to submit to it, as a necessary evil." "My hold of the colonies," he said, "is in the close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges, and equal protection. These are ties, which, though light as air, are strong as

Address.

links of iron. Let the colonies always keep the idea of their civil rights associated with your government;—they will cling and grapple to you; and no force under heaven will be of power to tear them from their allegiance. . . . The more they multiply, the more friends you will have; the more ardently they love liberty, the more perfect will be their obedience. . . . It is the spirit of the English Constitution, which, infused through the mighty mass, pervades, feeds, unites, invigorates, vivifies every part of the empire, even down to the minutest member."

If I were in the least ambitious, Ladies and Gentlemen, to attract your attention to any imagined skill of my own in presenting a subject, I should not have ventured thus to recall to you the magnificent scope, the pervading power, the instinctive and harmonious splendor, of that memorable oration with which, a hundred years ago last month, the oaken rafters of St. Stephen's rang. The perfect apprehension of remote facts, as when the distant seas or summits are seen by an eye which needs no glass, through a wholly transparent air; the vast comprehension, which took into immediate vision all facts and principles related to the subject, tracing at a glance their inter-relations, as one traces the lines of city streets from a 'coigne of vantage' above the roofs, and sees the rivers on either hand which kiss the piers; the opulence of knowledge; the precision and force of argumentation; the fervor of feeling, the energy of purpose, which

The Early Spirit of the Colonies.

modulated the rhetoric to its consenting grace and majesty; the lucid and large philosophy of history; the imperial imagination, vitalizing all, and touching it with ethereal lights:—we look at these, and almost feel that eloquence died when the lips of Burke were finally closed. One's impulse is to turn to silence; and not even to offer his few small coins, more paltry than ever before the wealth of such regalia.

But I have no desire at all, except to stand with you a few moments at the point of view at which the oration of Burke has placed us, and to seek, with you, to revive in our thoughts, with a little more of fulness in detail, the origin and the growth of that essential and prophesying spirit which he from afar discerned in these colonies. For in that lies the secret of our subsequent history. It is not certain that Burke himself, looking at the matter through the partial lights of English narrative, and treating the subject for immediate practical influence upon Parliament, has fully set forth either the sources or the strength of the temper which he saw. But the complete understanding of these is most important to whomsoever would read our annals.

The remark was long ago made by Macchiavelli,* that ‘States are rarely formed or re-formed save by

* “It must be laid down as a general rule, that it very seldom or never happens that any government is either well-founded at first, or thoroughly reformed afterwards, except the plan be laid and conducted by one man only, who has the sole power of giving all orders, and making all laws, that are necessary for its establishment.”

Political Discourses, upon Livy. Book I., chap. ix.

Address.

one man.' Certainly, however, it was not so with ours. The spirit shaped the body, here, according to the Platonic plan. The people formed its own commonwealths, its ultimate Nation; and "the people," says Bancroft, looking back to the peace of 1782, "the people was superior to its institutions, possessing the vital force which goes before organization, and gives to it strength and form."* This vital force, therefore, in the pre-Revolutionary American people, this inherent and energizing life, early developed, largely trained, acting at that time, and acting ever since, on our organized public development—this is the subject which I hope you will accept, as deserving your attention, and not unsuited to this occasion.

At the time when Burke saw the meaning, and interpreted the menace, of this distinctive American spirit, it had all the force which he ascribed to it; and the effect of it was shown, only more speedily, in larger and more energetic discovery, than he expected. It can scarcely be doubted that if the counsels of his wise statesmanship had been listened to by the Parliament on whose unheeding ears they fell, and by the Court which passionately repulsed them, the separation which was inevitable, between England and the colonies, would for a time have been postponed; and some of us might have been born, on American shores, the loyal subjects of King George. But those counsels were not heeded; as those of Chatham, six

* History of the United States, Vol. X, p. 593.

First Movements in the Colonies.

weeks earlier, in the House of Lords, had not been ; and just four weeks after they were uttered, before report of them could probably have reached this country, on the 19th of April, at Lexington and at Concord, out of the threatening murk of discontent shot that fierce flash of armed collision between the colonists and the troops of Great Britain, beyond which reconciliation was impossible ; of which the war, and the following Independence, were the pre-destined sequel.

Not quite a month later; as you remember, on the 10th of May, Ticonderoga, with Crown Point, was taken by the provincials ; and on the very day of the capture — as if to justify the name “Carillon,” given by the French to Ticonderoga, and to make its seizure the striking of a chime of bells*—the Continental Congress re-assembled at Philadelphia, with the proscribed John Hancock soon at its head, and entered on the exercise of its long authority ; an authority vague and undefined, as such an occasional authority must be, but made legitimate, and made comprehensive, by the voluntary submission of those whom the Congress represented. Washington was appointed Commander-in-Chief. As indicative of the tendencies of public opinion, before the end of May, the citizens of Mecklenburg county, in North Carolina, by public action

* “To Ticonderoga, the Indian ‘Meeting of Waters,’ they [the French] gave a name apparently singular, ‘Carillon,’ a Chime of Bells.”

Egbert Benson’s Mem. ; Coli. of the N. Y. Hist. Soc., 2d Series : Vol. 2 : page 96.

Address.

disowned allegiance to the British Crown, and adopted their declaration of Independence; and on the 17th of June, at Breed's Hill, the ability of the provincials to throw up redoubts under the cannon-fire of a fleet, and to make grass fences, with men behind them, a sufficient barrier to repeated charges of British veterans, was fully proved; and the great drama of our seven years' war was finally opened.

During the years immediately before us, these events, with those which succeeded, will be fully recited; and eloquence and poetry, the picture and the bronze, will again make familiar what the bulk and the prominence of intervening events had partly hidden from our view. The evacuation of Boston by the British; the bloody fight on the heights behind Brooklyn, so nearly fatal to the American cause; the crossing of the Delaware; the night attack on the Hessians at Trenton; Princeton, and Germantown, with the frightful winter at Valley Forge; the battles of Monmouth, Saratoga, Camden, King's Mountain, and Eutaw Springs; the final surrender of Cornwallis, at Yorktown:—all will in their turn be described, as their centennial anniversaries occur. The Past will come back to us. We shall hear again the pathetic and heroic story which touched the common-place life of our childhood with romance and with awe.

And with this will be repeated the narrative—not less impressive—of the civil wonders which accompanied the long military struggle; of the separate

Mr. Bancroft's History.

Constitutions adopted by the colonies ; of the great Declaration, which raised those colonies into a Nation ; of the marvellous State-papers, which seemed to Europe prepared in the woods, yet on which the highest encomiums were pronounced, by eminent Englishmen, in Parliament itself ; of the Articles of Confederation, which prepared the way for an organic Union ; of the French alliance, which brought soldiers of a monarchy to fight for a republic, and sent back with them a republican spirit too strong for the monarchy ; of the money, so worthless that a bushel of it would hardly buy a pair of shoes ; of the military stores, so utterly inadequate that barrels of sand had to represent powder, to encourage the troops ; of the final adoption, after the war, of that now venerable Constitution of government, which recent changes have expanded and modified, but under which the nation has lived from that day to this. All these will hereafter be recited.

It cannot but be regarded as a fortunate circumstance — fortunate for himself, and for those to whose means of historical study he has made such large and brilliant contributions — that the concluding volume of his History has just been published by Mr. Bancroft, whose relations to this Society have been so intimate ; and that down to the peace of 1782 he has completed his elaborate and shining narrative. The enthusiasm of youth has survived in him, to animate and enhance the acquisitions of age ; and those who read, in their

Address.

own youth, his earlier volumes, and admired alike their strength and polish, will rejoice that his hand has placed the capital upon the tall and fluted shaft. "Worthy deeds," said Milton, "are not often destitute of worthy relators; as by a certain fate, great acts and great eloquence have most commonly gone hand in hand, equaling and honoring each other in the same ages."*

It is, of course, not my purpose to ask your attention to any of the particulars of that remarkable and fascinating history whose jutting outlines I have traced. Next week, at Lexington and at Concord, eloquent voices will open the story. Others will follow, in swift succession, till every field, and each principal fact, has found celebration. My office is merely preparatory to theirs. The subject before me is not picturesque. It hardly admits of any entertaining or graphic treatment. But it nevertheless is of primary importance; and all who follow will have to assume what I would exhibit. There was a certain energizing spirit, an impersonal but inherent and ubiquitous temper, in the people of the colonies, which lay behind their wide and sudden Revolutionary movement; which pushed that movement to unforeseen ends, and which built a Republic where the only result sought at the outset was relief from a tax. Burke discerned this, before it had been exhibited in the field, or had done more than give its own tone to debates and State-papers. From that time on, to the end of the war, it was constantly de-

* Hist. Brit., Book II.

The Spirit of the people important.

clared — brooding and brightening in the obscurest air, giving Congress its authority, giving conflict its meaning, inspiring leaders, restoring always the shattered and the scanty ranks. It was this invulnerable, inexpugnable force, which no calamities could ever overwhelm, which was sure, from the start, of the ultimate victory.

It is this, and this only, of which the world ever thinks in connection with the time, or of which the permanent history of the country will take much account. The incidents are trivial, except for their relation to this. It surprises us to remember how small were the forces, on either side, in that “valley of decision” in which questions so vital to us, and to mankind, were submitted to the arbitrament of battle ; that Burgoyne’s army numbered at its surrender less than six thousand English and German troops, and had never contained more than eight thousand, with an uncertain contingent of Canadians and Indians ; that at Camden, Gates had but six thousand men, only one-fourth of them Continentals, and Cornwallis but two thousand ; that the force which capitulated at Yorktown was but seven thousand ; and that the whole number of troops sent from England to this country, during the entire continuance of the war, was less than a hundred and thirteen thousand.

Compare these numbers with those of the large and disciplined armies which Frederick II., twenty years earlier, encountered at Rossbach and at Leuthen ;

Address.

compare them with those which, thirty years after, swarmed forth from France, under Napoleon,—and they are the small dust of the balance. Compare them with those of France, on the one hand, or of Germany on the other, in their tremendous unfinished duel, and the largest battles in which our fathers took part seem skirmishes of outposts. Nay, compare them with the forces, from the North and the South, which fought each other in our late civil war, and the Revolutionary musters become nearly imperceptible.

It was the spirit behind the forces, which wielded the instruments, and compelled the events, which gave these any importance in history. Impalpable, indestructible, omnipresent in activity, self-perpetuating, there was this vital impersonal temper, common to many, superior to all, which wrought and fought, from first to last, in the Congress, on the field. In some respects it was a unique force, without precise parallel among peoples, breaking in unexpectedly on the courses of history. A more or less clear recognition of the fact has given to that time its relative prominence before mankind. A distinct apprehension of the nature of the force so victoriously revealed, is necessary to show how the Revolution became as complete and fruitful as it was, and how that small American struggle, going on in a country remote and recent, and succeeded by events incomparably more striking, has taken its place among the significant and memorable facts in the history of the world.

The Colonists plain people.

What was that force, then? and whence did it come? If I mistake not, it was ampler in its sources, more abundant, more secular, and more various in its energy, than we have often been wont to conceive.

There was certainly nothing of the ideal-heroic among the ante-Revolutionary people of this country. They did not live for sentiment, or on it. They were not *doctrinaires*, though they are sometimes so represented; and nothing could have been further from their plans than to make themselves champions of what did not concern them, or to go crusading for fanciful theories and imaginary prizes. They were, for the most part, intelligent, conscientious, God-fearing people—at least those were such who gave tone to their communities, and the others either accepted the impression, or achieved the imitation, of their governing spirit. But they were plain, practical people, almost wholly of the middle-class, who lived, for the most part, by their own labor, who were intent on practical advantages, and who rejoiced in conquering the wilderness, in making the marsh into a meadow, in sucking by their fisheries of the abundance of the seas, and in seeing the first houses of logs, with mud mortar, and oiled paper for glass in the windows, giving place to houses of finished timber, or imported brick, with sometimes even mahogany balustrades.

When the descendants of the settlers at the mouth of the Piscataqua, replied to a reproof of one of their ministers, that the design of their fathers in coming

Address.

thither had not been simply to cultivate religion, but also largely to trade and catch fish, they undoubtedly represented a spirit which had been common along the then recent American coast.* The Plymouth Colony was exceptional in its character. To a large extent, the later and wealthier Massachusetts Colony was animated by sovereign religious considerations; and so were those of Rhode Island and Connecticut. But they are certainly right who affirm that even these men, or many of them, showed a tough and persistent secular enterprise combining with their religious zeal. It was indeed an indispensable element to the soundness of their character. It kept them from wide fanatical excesses. It made them hardy, sagacious, indefatigable, inflexible in their hold on the fields and the freedoms which they had won.

As compared with our more recent pioneers, who have peopled the territories, subdued the mountains, and opened toward Asia the Golden Gate, the religious element was certainly more prominent in those who earliest came to this country. But even they were far from being blind to material advantages, and far enough from being willing to live as idle enthusiasts. "Give me neither poverty nor riches," was their constant prayer; with an emphasis upon "poverty." They meant to worship God according to their consciences; and woe be to him who should forbid! But they meant, also, to get what of comfort and enjoyment

* Adams' Annals of Portsmouth. Page 94.

Misconception of the Colonists easy.

they could, and of physical possession, from the world in which they worshipped ; and they felt themselves co-workers with God, when the orchard was planted, and the wild vine tamed ; when the English fruits had been domesticated, under the shadow of savage forests, and the maize lifted its shining ranks upon the fields that had been barren ; when the wheat and rye were rooted in the valleys, and the grass was made to grow upon the mountains.

It is easy, of course, to heighten the common, to magnify the rare and superior virtues, of men to whom we owe so much. Time itself assists to this, as it makes the mosses and lichens grow on ancient walls, disguising with beauty the rent and ravage. It is easy to exaggerate their religious enthusiasm, till all the other traits of their character are dimmed by its excessive brightness. Our filial pride inclines us to this ; for, if we could, we should love to feel, all of us, that we are sprung from untitled nobles, from saints who needed no canonization, from men of such heroic mould, and women of such tender devoutness, that the world elsewhere was not worthy of them ; that they brought to these coasts a wholly unique celestial life, through the scanty cabins which were to it as a manger, and the quaint apparel which furnished its swaddling-clothes ; that airs Elysian played around them, while they took the wilderness, as was said of the Lady Arbella Johnson, "on their way to heaven."

I cannot so read their history. Certainly, I should

Address.

be the last in this assembly to say any word—in whatever haste, in whatever inadvertence—in disparagement of those who, with a struggle that we never have paralleled and can scarcely comprehend, planted firmly the European civilization upon these shores. I remember the hardness which they endured, and shame be to me, if, out of the careless luxury of our time, I say an unworthy word of those who faced for us the forest and the frost, the Indian and the wolf, the gaunt famine and the desolating plague. I remember that half the Plymouth colonists died the first winter, and that in the spring, when the long-waiting Mayflower sailed again homeward, not one of the fainting survivors went with her,—and I glory in that unflinching fortitude which has given renown to the sandy shore ! Our vigor is flaccid, our grasp uncertain, our stiffest muscle is limp and loose, beside the unyielding grapple of their tough wills.

But what I do say is, that the figures of even the eminent among them were not so colossal as they sometimes appear, through the transfiguring mists of Time ; that of culture, as we know it, they for the most part had enjoyed very little ; that even in character they were consciously far from being perfect. They were plain people, hard-working, Bible-reading, much in earnest, with a deep sense of God in them, and a thorough detestation of the devil and his works ; who had come hither to get a fresh and large opportunity for work and life ; who were here set in cir-

The Colonists transferring great forces.

cumstances which gave stimulus to their energy, and brought out their peculiar and masterful forces. But they were not, for the most part, beyond their associates across the seas in force or foresight; and they left behind them many their peers, and some their superiors, in the very qualities which most impress us. "Not many wise, not many noble, not many mighty," —then, as aforetime, that was true of those whom God called. The common people, with their pastors and guides, had come to the woods, to labor, and prosper, and hear God's word. And upon them He put the immense honor of building here a temple and a citadel, whose walls we mark, whose towers we count, and to which the world has since resorted.

But it is, also, always to be remembered that the early settlers of this country were not of one stock merely, but of several; and that all of them came out of communities which had had to face portentous problems, and which were at the time profoundly stirred by vast moral and political forces. They were themselves impregnated with these forces. They bore them imbedded in their consciousness; entering, whether articulately or not, with a dominant force into their thought, into their life. They transported to these coasts, by the simple act of transferring their life hither, a power and a promise from the greatest age of European advancement. They could not have helped it, if they would. They could more easily have left behind the speech which they had learned in child-

Address.

hood, than they could have dropped, on their stormy way across the ocean, the self-reliance, the indomitable courage, the constructive energy, and the great aspiration, of which the lands they left were full.

This, it seems to me, is hardly recognized as clearly and widely as it should be: that the public life of a magnificent age—a life afterward largely, for a time, displaced in Europe, by succeeding reäctions—was brought to this continent, from different lands, under different languages, by those who settled it; that it was the powerful and moulding initial force in our civilization; and that here it survived, from that time forward, shaping affairs, erecting institutions, and making the Nation what it finally came to be.

They may not themselves have been wholly aware of what they brought. There was nothing in the outward circumstance of their action to make it distinguished. They had no golden or silver censers in which to transport the undecaying and costly flame. They brought it as fire is sometimes carried, by rough hands, in hollow reeds. But they brought it, nevertheless; and here it dwelt, sheltered and fed, till a continent was illumined by it. Let us think of this a little. Let some rapid suggestions call up to us the times, the new and unmeasured energies of which swept out to this continent, when the colonists came; all the forces of which—political, social, and not merely religious—found here their enlarging arena.

At the time of the seizure of New Netherland by

Elements of the Population.

the English, in 1664, the main elements of the population, afterward composing the thirteen colonies, were already on these shores. Subsequent arrivals brought increase of numbers, except in New England, where the English immigration was then at its end. Important colonies, as Pennsylvania and Georgia, date their existence from a time more recent. But the principal nationalities of northern and north-western Europe, from which our early population was derived, had already representatives here; and what followed contributed rather to the increase than to the change of that population. It was said, you know, that eighteen languages were spoken before then in the thriving village which Stuyvesant surrendered, and which is now this swarming metropolis;* and we certainly know that Englishmen, Dutchmen, Swedes, Germans, French Huguenots, Scotch Presbyterians, Quakers, and Catholics, were at that time upon the American coast.

From that point, then, it is well to look back, and see what was the governing spirit, the diffused and moulding moral life, which the steady immigration of sixty years, back to the date of the building of Jamestown, had been bringing hither. For these sixty years, in

* This surprising statement appears to have been first made as early as 1643, by the Director-General Kieft, to Father Jogues, the Jesuit Priest, escaped from the Iroquois, who was then his guest. It was afterward repeated by Father Jogues, in his Description of New Netherland.

Address.

comparison with the hundred and ten which followed, were like the first twenty-five years in one's personal life, compared with the fifty which succeed. They gave the direction, projected the impulse, prescribed the law, of the subsequent development ; and they, of course, surpass in importance any other equal period, in showing how the nation came at last to be what it was. But these sixty years, also, were vitally connected with the forty or fifty which had gone before them ; since in those had been born, and morally trained, the men and women who subsequently came hither. Out of those had come the vivifying forces which the settlers at Jamestown, and they who came later, transferred to this continent. We shall not have reached the top-roots of our history, till we have gone back to their beginning.

Look back, then, from the surrender of New Amsterdam, to the date of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth, in 1558—less than fifty years before Jamestown began, little more than fifty years before Adrian Block built on this island its first small ship,* and named it “The Restless,”—and you have before you

* This was in 1614; but another ship had been previously constructed on the coast. “Mr. Cooper, in his Naval History, speaks of Block’s yacht as ‘the first decked vessel built within the old United States.’ But the honor of precedence in American naval architecture must fairly be yielded to Popham’s unfortunate colony on the Kennebec. The ‘Virginia,’ of Sagadahoc, was the first European-built vessel within the original thirteen States. The ‘Restless,’ of Manhattan, was the pioneer craft of New York.”

A remarkable Century.

the remarkable century, out of which had broken the settlements on these shores, at the end of which they all had passed under British supremacy. That was the birth-time of our public life. From its great spirit, from its energetic and vivid experience, fell a splendor and a power on the embryo people which finally became the American Nation.

It was a munificent, a heroical century ; in which, for the first time, the immense vigor of popular enthusiasm entered decisively into national development, and forced acceptance from statesmen and kings ; which was, accordingly, the boldest in plan, the widest in work, the most replete with constructive energy, which up to that time had been known in Europe. Fruitful schemes, strenuous struggles, extraordinary genius, amazing achievement, the decay of authority, the swift advance of popular power—these so crowd the annals of it that no brief narrative could give a summary of them. Long repressed tendencies came to sudden culmination. Hidden forces found vast development. The exuberant and out-breaking energies of Christendom could no more be restrained within ancient limitations, than the lightnings, elaborated in hidden chambers of earth and sky, can be locked in the clouds from which they leap.

The invention of the movable type, a hundred years earlier, at Harlem or at Maintz, had made books the possession of many, where manuscripts had been the luxury of the few. Knowledge was distributed, and

Address.

thought was interchanged, on this new vehicle, with a freedom, to a breadth, before unknown. The founding of libraries, the enlargement of universities, had given opportunity for liberal studies; and the ancient world drew nearer to the modern, as the elegant letters of Greece and Rome made the genius and the action again familiar with which their times had been illustrious. At the same time, the discovery of this continent had expanded the globe to the minds of Europeans, and had opened new areas, the more exciting because undefined, to their enterprise and hope. The popular imagination, in the early part of that age, was stirred by tales of sea-faring adventure as it had never been by the wildest fiction. The air was full of romance and wonder, as savage forests, dusky figures, feathered crests, ornaments of barbaric gold, strange habitations, unheard-of populations, were lifted before the gaze of Europe, along the new Western horizon. Almost nothing appeared incredible. Grotius himself, scholar, jurist, statesman as he was, cautious by nature, and trained in courts, was inclined to believe in an arctic race whose heads grew beneath their shoulders. El Dorado was to Raleigh as real a locality as the duchy of Devon. Even Caliban and Puck seemed almost possible persons, in an age so full of astounding revelations.

But neither the magical art of printing, nor the discovery of the transatlantic continent, had stirred with such tumultuous force the mind of Christendom as

Influence of the Reformation.

had the sudden Reformation of religion, starting in Germany, and swiftly extending through Northern Europe. To those who accepted it, this seemed a revival of Divine revelations. It brought the Most High to immediate personal operation upon them. As in the old prophetic days, the voice of speech came echoing forth, from the amber brightness which was as the appearance of the bow in the cloud. The instant privilege, the constant obligation, of every man to come to God, by faith in His Son ; the dignity of that personal nature in man for which this Son of God had died ; the vastness of the promises, whose immortal splendors interpreted the cross ; the regal right of every soul to communion, by the word, with the Spirit by whom that word was given :—these broke, like a flash from heights celestial, not only on the devout and the studious, but over the common life of nations.

Before the force so swiftly and supremely inspired, whatever resisted it had to give way. It not only released great multitudes of men into instant independence of the ancient dominant spiritual authority. It loosened the ligatures, or shattered the strength, of temporal tyrannies ; and its impulses went more widely than its doctrines. In Italy and Spain, as well as in England, in the parts of Germany which retained their ancient allegiance to the Pontiff, as well as in those which had thrown this off, there was an unwonted stimulation in the air ; and the forces, of learning,

Address.

of logic, or of arms, which fought against the Reformation, were themselves more eager and more effective because of the impulse which it had given.

Commerce was extending, as letters and liberties were thus advancing. Inventions followed each other almost as swiftly, with almost as much of startling novelty, as in our own time ; and the ever-increasing consciousness of right, of opportunity, and of power, the sense of liberation, the expectation of magnificent futures—these extended among the peoples, with a rapidity, in a measure, before unknown.

It was an age, therefore, not so much of destruction, as of paramount impulse to wide and bold enterprise. Vast hopes, vast works, imperial plans, were native to it. It was an age of detonating strife, but of study, too, and liberal thought ; of the noblest poetry, the most copious learning, a busy industry, a discursive philosophy, a sagacious statesmanship ; when astonishing discovery stimulated afresh magnificent enterprise ; when great actions crowded upon each other ; when the world seemed to have suddenly turned plastic, and to offer itself for man's rebuilding ; when each decade of years, to borrow an energetic expression of Brougham, “ staggered, under a load of events which had formerly made centuries to bend.”

So far as the South of Europe is concerned, it is represented to us chiefly, certainly most pleasantly, by the great names, in literature or in fine art, by which it is distinguished ; Tasso, crowned at Rome, and

Renowned Men of the Century.

Galileo, condemned ;* Cervantes, Calderon, Lope de Vega, in Spain ; Tintoretto, with his audacity of genius, and the lightning of his pencil ; Cagliari, better known as Paul Veronese, Guido Reni, the Carracci ; Velasquez, Murillo, and Salvator Rosa. It saw the close of Titian's life, and of Michael Angelo's. It saw the completion of the dome of St. Peter's.

In Northern Europe great clusters of names also shine on the century, of men preëminent in science, letters, or the fine arts ; Kepler, Tycho Brahe ; Moliere, Racine, Rochefoucauld, Pascal ; Rubens, Rembrandt, Van Dyke, Claude Lorraine. Edmund Spenser, the 'Prince of Poets,' as his monument describes him, filled his career in it ; Richard Hooker, Philip Sidney, Walter Raleigh, Francis Bacon, John Selden, Isaac Casaubon. It bears upon its brow, as it moves in the great procession of historic periods, the dazzling diadem of the name of Shakespeare. It saw the youth of Leibnitz, and of Newton. It heard the music of Milton's verse. It saw the entire life of Descartes, the middle manhood of Spinoza. It watched Grotius from his birth to his burial, in the city of Delft.

* The traveler to Rome, visiting the church of S. MARIA SOPRA MINERVA, will hardly fail to feel the propriety of its name, if it is recalled to him that in one of the halls of the monastery attached to it, then occupied by the Inquisition, Galileo met his sentence, and pronounced his retraction : "I abjure, curse, and detest, the error and the heresy of the motion of the earth," etc. It startles one to remember that this was at as late a date as June 22, 1633 ; five years before Harvard College was founded. The Inquisition itself has since seen the truth of the more celebrated words which the aged philosopher is said to have uttered, in an under tone, when rising from his knees.

Address.

The telescope came to light in it; and brought to men's view vast whirls of suns, as if re-creating for them the heavens. The microscope was so perfected as to carry the sight, almost without exaggeration, from the infinitely great to the infinitely little, and to show the marvels of organization in creatures so minute that a speck of dust is a mountain beside them. The thermometer, the barometer, the air-pump, the nature and use of electricity, the circulation of the blood—these are among its great discoveries. The mariner's compass was improved and illumined till it became almost a new instrument. The first English newspaper had its origin in this century. Logarithms were invented. The Royal Exchange was opened in London. The Dutch and English East India Companies were established. The globe was explored on every meridian, by the search of its discovery. It gained new luxuries, as well as new arts, and was the first century sweetened in Europe by the manufacture of refined sugar, or soothed and stimulated by tobacco and coffee.

Things like these are the surface indications of prodigious forces working beneath; like the specks or wreaths of glittering spume which are flung into the air, when immense currents rush into collision. But the intensity and the breadth of these forces are better represented by the national changes which the century witnessed.

To look only at the states of Northern Europe, it

Changes in Nations.

saw the magnificent reign of Elizabeth, the great English Rebellion, the execution of Charles First, the ten years of the Commonwealth, the final return of Charles Second. It saw the Huguenot struggle in France, the stormy youth and the brilliant government of Henry Fourth, the following reign of Louis Thirteenth, the earlier successes of Louis Fourteenth ; the long ministry of Sully, on whom Henry leaned with such justified confidence ; the triumph of Richelieu, who broke the power of feudalism on the one hand, of political protestantism on the other, and who "made his royal master," as Montesquieu said, "the second man in France, but the first in Europe ; humbling the king, while he exalted the monarchy." It saw the ministry, the marriage, and the death, of Cardinal Mazarin.

The forty years' reign of Philip Second filled nearly half of it. It witnessed the amazing revolt of the Netherlands, their successful resistance of all the Spanish fleets and forces, their final establishment of a Protestant Republic. It saw the regeneration of Sweden ; and it included, in its extraordinary and comprehensive annals, the whole course of the Thirty Years' War, with the sorrow and sacrifice which that involved, the heroic energies which it revealed, till it closed in the welcome peace of Westphalia.

Another century so energized by great emergent opinions, so suddenly full of a vehement and conquering public life, so prolific in enterprise, so swarming

Address.

with productive force, one must look long to find. When we reach it in history we are conscious of stepping out of the Past, into the modern life of Christendom. The patience, skill, inventive daring, of our civilization, were more vitally a part of it than were its longest and fiercest conflicts. It fought, to get more room for work. Elemental rages darkened the heavens. The concussion of ethereal forces was constant. Yet the work of construction went always forward, and on the broadest national scale. New liberties were asserted and organized. New states came rounding into form. The descendants of the Batavians made the scanty lands which they had rescued from the wash of the sea, the seat of a history more majestic in its elements, both of tragedy and of triumph, than the Continent had seen, and the centre of a commerce which flung its tentacles around the globe. The English fleets, in which Catholic and Protestant fought together, scattered the Armada, under skies that seemed to conspire for their help, and hit, as with ceaseless lightning strokes, the ships, and coasts, and power of Spain; while all the time went widely on, with only indeed augmented impulse, the labor of inventors, the studies of scholars, the voyages of discoverers, the theologian's discussion, the painter's pencil, and the statesman's plan.

So full of immense movement was the century, so opulent in achievement, so mighty in impulse, that the earth seemed freshly alive beneath it, the skies

Northern Europe full of life.

burnished with prophetic gleams. The common people, for a time at least, had mastered their place in politics and society ; and the whole mind of Northern Europe was full of an intense stimulation. Education was wide. Plain men, like Governor Bradford, never trained in any university, were easy masters of five or six languages.* Farmers' sons, like Francis Drake, became great admirals. The enterprise of the time was not reckless or vague, but was the expression of this abounding, exuberant life, instructed by research, and guided by courageous wisdom. There was nothing factitious in the force of the century, as there is nothing deceptive in its fame. Alive in every fibre, with an exultant and stimulated life, Northern Europe sent forth its freshly-awakened, world-sweeping activities, as streams are shot into sudden motion when the Easter sun unlocks the ice.

This was the century out of the midst of which the early settlers of this continent came ; whose eager energies came here with them. They were not its splendid representatives. No fleets of galleons brought them over. They came in coarse clothing, not in raiment of velvet, or gilded armor. They attracted

* “ He was a person for study, as well as action ; and hence, notwithstanding the difficulties through which he passed in his youth, he attained unto a notable skill in languages : the Dutch tongue was become almost as vernacular to him as the English ; the French tongue he could also manage ; the Latin, and the Greek, he had mastered ; but the Hebrew he most of all studied, ‘ because,’ he said, ‘ he would see with his own eyes the ancient oracles of God in their native beauty.’ ”

Address.

little attention at the time. They only seemed to themselves to be doing a work which somehow had fallen to their lot, and which must be done ; and that the century which they represented would be more illustrious by reason of their action, was certainly a thought which never occurred to them. But they shared its life, if not its renown ; they brought its vigor, if not its wealth. Their small stockades, at Jamestown and Plymouth, at New Amsterdam and Fort Orange, were the points on our coast where that energetic and sovereign century, then passing over Europe, set up its banners.

We never shall understand them, or their work, except this be before us.

Recall, then, the England which the colonists left and represented. Elizabeth herself had been dead four years when they landed at Jamestown, and seventeen years when they settled at Plymouth ; but the image of her imperious face was on most of the coins which they brought hither, and the memories of her reign had a force more vital than the actual power of her successor. The middle-aged could well remember the camps, the watch-fires, the universal excitements, of the year of the Armada. The young might have read, upon broad-sheets, her "Golden Speech" to her last Parliament.* The older might have sailed with

* "There seemed for a moment to be some danger that the long and glorious reign of Elizabeth would have a shameful and disastrous end. She, however, with admirable judgment and temper, declined the contest, put herself at the head of the reforming party, redressed the grievance,

The Reaction in England.

Frobisher or Drake, or themselves have borne arms under the famous admirals and captains, who, at her inspiration, had fought with a triumphant energy on sea and land.

The very temper which now strove to displace that earlier spirit only contributed to make it signal. Raleigh was beheaded October 29th, 1618 ; eleven years after Jamestown commenced, two years before the Mayflower's voyage. That was the last passionate blow of the vanquished Spain at the age of Elizabeth, whose energy and whose chivalry he represented. It showed the unsleeping animosity of the Spaniard ; but it also brought into startling exhibition the weakness and wickedness which were now on the throne from which the great daughter of Anne Boleyn had lately passed ; and the spatter of his blood smote every heart, which was loyal to the Past, with pain and rage. Carlyle has suggested that Oliver Cromwell was perhaps at that time living in London, a student of law, and may have been a spectator of the scene. Many others, who were afterward in this country, must have seen the gallant and cultured man whose youthful grace had attracted Elizabeth, and whose life had imaged the splendor of the age ; and a sharp sense of

thanked the Commons, in touching and dignified language, for their tender care of the general weal, brought back to herself the hearts of the people, and left to her successors a memorable example of the way in which it behooves a ruler to deal with public movements which he has not the means of resisting."

Macaulay : Hist. of England. Vol. I., page 63.

Address.

the Nemesis in history may well have startled them when the son and successor of the royal assassin bowed his reluctant and haughty head beneath the axe, in front of Whitehall.

The daring and inspiring spirit which had marked the preceding half-century was not destroyed, by the murder of one of its representatives, or by the treachery of another. A year after the landing at Plymouth, Thomas Wentworth, afterward known as Earl of Strafford, that ‘great, brave, bad man,’ whom Macaulay has pictured with a pencil so exquisite and so unrelenting, declared in Parliament, with vehement emphasis, that “the liberties, franchises, privileges, and jurisdictions of Parliament, are the ancient and undoubted birthright and inheritance of the subjects of England.” That was then a passionate conviction in the House of Commons. Twenty years later, when he who then uttered it had been for twelve years its fierce antagonist, it caught him in its grasp, and swept him to the scaffold. The pre-Revolutionary struggle of our fathers had its prophecy in that sentence. Its seminal principle involved their whole contest.

Before the Pilgrims sailed from Holland, he whom Elizabeth, forty years before, in the superb promise of his youth, had called her “young Lord Keeper,” was Chancellor of England. His “Novum Organum” might have come to our shores with Bradford and Carver; his later writings with Winthrop and Higginson. His immense influence on human thought syn-

Shakespeare, and Milton.

chronises completely with the English settlements on our coast. The then new English version of the Scriptures was just in time to gild with its lights, of Hebrew story and Christian faith, the rude life on savage shores. Shakespeare had died, untimely, in 1616; and the first collected edition of his plays was published in the year of the settlement of this city. How far the impulse and renown of his genius had preceded his death we cannot be sure; but the children of those who had never read, who certainly had not seen his plays at the Blackfriars' or the Globe, have been debtors ever since to that supreme and visioned mind which reanimated the past, interpreted history, and searched the invisible spirit of man as if it were transparent crystal. Milton was a lad, twelve years old, when the Plymouth colony began, having been born, in 1608, in Bread street, London, under the armorial sign of the "Spread Eagle;" and his public life was wholly accomplished within the period now under review, though it was not till later that the "Paradise Lost" was published in London, and the chequered and lofty life of the poet was closed in sleep.

These names make the age which presents them majestic. But their chief importance to us, at this moment, is derived from the fact that they represent a popular life which preceded themselves, and which quickened the personal genius that surpassed it. The authors were the fountain-shafts, through which shot up, in flashing leap, the waters flowing from distant

Address.

heights. With the various beauty, the incomparable force, of their differing minds, they gave expression to impalpable influences of which the age itself was full.

The same influences wrought in humbler men, who could not give them such expression. They were the vital inheritance of our fathers. The men of the English middle-class,—they were the men from the loins of whose peers, and whose possible associates, Raleigh, and Shakespeare, and Milton, had sprung. They could not, many of them, read the Latin of the “*De Augmentis*.” They might not appreciate the cosmic completeness of Shakespeare’s mind, or the marvellous beauty of *Comus* and *L’Allegro*. But they incorporated, more than others, the essential spirit of that prolific, prophetic age, which had found its voice in these supreme writers. They had breathed from infancy that invigorating air which was full of discovery, enterprise, hope, of widened learning, popular enthusiasm, a fresh and vivid Christian faith. They had felt the inrush of that vehement life which for sixty years had been sweeping over England ; and the irrepressible temper of the time, which gave birth to the letters, impulse to the discovery, law to the statesmanship, life to the religion, of the age of Elizabeth, was as much a part of them as their bones and their blood.

They came, in large part, because they represented that spirit ; because it seemed to them likely thenceforth to be less common and governing in England ; and because they would rather encounter the seas, and

The Dutch, and Walloons.

face the perils and pains of the wilderness, than tarry in a country where James was king, and George Villiers was minister. When Endicott cut out the cross at Salem from the banner of England, he expressed a temper as old and as stubborn as the fights against Spain. When Wadsworth, fifty years later, seized the charter of Connecticut, and hid it in the Wyllys' oak, he did precisely what the English traditions of a century earlier had enjoined as his duty. And when the discerning Catholics of Maryland accepted religious freedom in their colony, they only expressed anew the spirit in which their fathers had fought the Armada, though the pontiff had blessed it, in their loyalty to a Queen against whom he had proclaimed a crusade.

It is never to be forgotten that that wonderful century, which saw at its beginning the coronation of Elizabeth, and at its end the death of Cromwell—the age of Grenville, Raleigh, Drake, of Bacon, Shakespeare, and the manhood of Milton—that was the century, in which the arts and arms of England, its resolute temper, and its sagacious and liberal life, were solidly planted upon these shores.

The powerful element brought from Holland, by the Dutch and the Walloons, was only the counterpart of this. An eminent American has made it familiar, in our time, to all who admire heroism in action, and eloquence in story.

Mr. Motley has said of William the Silent, that

Address.

"his efforts were constant to elevate the middle-class ; to build up a strong third party, which should unite much of the substantial wealth and intelligence of the land, drawing constantly from the people, and deriving strength from national enthusiasm,—a party which should include nearly all the political capacity of the country ; and his efforts were successful."* "As to the grandes, they were mostly of those who sought to 'swim between two waters,' according to the Prince's expression." The boers, or laborers, were untrained and coarse, not the material with which to erect an enduring commonwealth ; and on this stalwart middle-class, trained by churches and common-schools, skillful in enterprise, patient in industry, fervent in patriotism, unconquerable in courage, the illustrious patriot depended, under God, for the safety of his country.

Among the inhabitants of the province of New Netherland, when it came into the English possession, were many representing this class. The early servants of the West India Company had been succeeded by farmers and traders. The patroons of the vast and indefinite manors had, for the most part, tarried at home, and their titles had largely been extinguished. The colonists then here,—agriculturists, mechanics, sailors, dealers—represented fairly the commercial, political, social spirit, which was prevalent in Holland ; and while wolves and Indians filled the forests, which then extended from Canal Street to Harlem, the life

* *Rise of the Dutch Republic.* Vol. III., page 219.

Attitude of the Netherlands.

in the two separated settlements was much the same as in the equal contemporaneous villages of the Fatherland. Maurice—for whom the Hudson River had first been named—was Stadholder of the Netherlands, when the permanent settlement was made here; and the clouded lustre of his great name was still vivid with a gleam from the past. Only two years before, the contest with Spain had re-commenced. During the preceding twelve years' armistice, the United Netherlands had passed through a disastrous interval, of religious dissension, ambitious intrigue, and popular tumult. But that was now ended; and the first stroke of the Spanish arms, under Spinola, had revived the magnificent tradition of the days when, as their historian has said, “the provinces were united in one great hatred, and one great hope.” The interval of peace had not softened the stubbornness of their purpose to be free. They were ready again ‘to pass through the sea of blood, that they might reach the promised land;’ and all that was inspiring in the annals of two preceding generations came out to instant exhibition, as hidden pictures are drawn forth by fire.

The earlier years of Maurice himself, when the twig was becoming the tree—“tandem fit surculus arbor;” his following victories, when the renowned Spanish commanders were smitten by him into utter rout, as at Nieuport and at Turnhout; the fatal year of the murder of his father, when the ‘nation lost its guiding-star, and the little children cried in the streets;’ the

Address.

frightful “ Spanish fury ” at Antwerp ; the siege of Leyden, and the young university which commemorated the heroism of those who had borne it ; the siege of Harlem, and all the rage and agony of its close :—these things came up, and multitudes more—the whole panorama in which these were incidents—when the Spaniards sought, in 1622, to open the passage into the North by capturing the town of Bergen-op-Zoom, and when Maurice relieved it. The temper which this tremendous experience, so intense and prolonged, had bred in the Hollanders—the omnipresent, indestructible spirit, not wholly revealed in any one person, but partly in millions—this was again as vigorous as ever, throughout the Republic which it had created, when the thirty families came to this island, when the two hundred persons were resident here, in 1625.

Some of those then here, more who followed, were of the same class, the same occupation and habit of life, with those who had fought for sixty years, on sea and land, against the frenzied assaults of Spain ; who, under Heemskirk, had smitten her fleet into utter destruction, beneath the shadow of Gibraltar ; who had fought her ships on every wave, and had blown up their own rather than let her flag surmount them ; who had more than once opened the dykes, and welcomed the sea, rather than yield to the Spanish possession the lands thus drowned ; who had ravaged the coasts, and captured the colonies, of the haughty Peninsula ; and who, in the midst of all this whirlwind of

Education in the Netherlands.

near and far battle, had been inaugurating new forms of Government, cultivating religion, advancing education, developing the arts, draining the lakes, and organizing a commerce that surrounded the world.

When the four Dutch forts were established—at this point, at Harlem, at Fort Orange, on the Delaware,—this spirit was simply universal in Holland; and those who came hither could not but bring it, unless they had dropped their identity on the way. They came for trade. They came to purchase lands by labor; to get what they could from the virgin soil, and send peltries and timber back to Holland. But they brought the patience, the enterprise and the courage, the indomitable spirit, and the hatred of tyranny, into which they had been born, into which their nation had been baptized with blood.

Education came with them; the free schools, in which Holland had led the van of the world, being early transplanted to these shores; a Latin school being established here in 1659, to which scholars were sent from distant settlements.* An energetic Christian faith came with them, with its Bibles, its ministers, its interpreting books. Four years before, Grotius, imprisoned in the castle of Louvestein, had

* "It is very pleasant to reflect that the New England pilgrims, during their residence in the glorious country of your ancestry, found already established there a system of schools which John of Nassau, eldest brother of William the Silent, had recommended in these words: 'You must urge upon the States General that they should establish free schools, where children of quality, as well as of poor families, for a very small sum, could be well and Christianly educated and brought up. This

Address.

written his notes upon the Scriptures, and that treatise on the Truth of the Christian Religion, which, within the same century, was translated from the original Dutch into Latin, English, French, Flemish, German, Swedish, Persian, Arabic, the language of Malacca, and modern Greek. He had written it, he says, for the instruction of sailors; that they might read it in the leisure of the voyage, as he had written it in the leisure of confinement, and might carry the impression of that Christianity whose divinity it affirmed, around the globe. Copies of it may easily have come hither in the vessels of the nation which had no forests, but which owned more ships than all Europe beside.

The political life of the Hollanders had come, as well as their commercial spirit, and their decisive religious faith. They loved the liberty for which they and their fathers had tenaciously fought. They saw its utilities, and understood its conditions; and if you recall the motto of the Provinces, in their earlier struggle—"Concordia, res parvæ crescunt; Discordia, maximæ dilabuntur"—and if you add a pregnant sentence from their Declaration of Independence, made in July, 1581, I think you will have some fair impression of the influences which afterward wrought in this

would be the greatest and most useful work you could ever accomplish, for God and Christianity, and for the Netherlands themselves.' . . . This was the feeling about popular education in the Netherlands, during the 16th century."

Mr. Motley's Letter to St. Nicholas Society; quoted in Address of Hon. J. W. Beekman, 1869, pp. 30, 31.

Declaration of Independence.

land, transported hither by those colonists. "When the Prince," says that Declaration, "does not fulfil his duty as protector, when he oppresses his subjects, destroys their ancient liberties, and treats them as slaves, he is to be considered not a Prince, but a Tyrant. As such, the Estates of the land may lawfully and reasonably depose him, and elect another in his place."* They did not elect another to the place; but, renouncing their allegiance to Philip, as their children did afterward to George Third, they founded a Republic, which lasted on those oozy plains two hundred years.

The very temper which afterward spoke in the public documents issued from Philadelphia, had been uttered in Holland two centuries earlier; and they who came hither from that land of dykes, storks, and windmills, had brought it as part of their endowment. No master-pieces came with them, of Rubens or Rembrandt, whose genius flourished in the same century, under the skies lurid with battle, and on the soil fattened with blood. No wealth came with them, like that which already was making Amsterdam—"the Venice of the North"—one of the richest towns in Europe. They built a stone chapel, in 1642†; but they could not reproduce on these shores a single one of the scores of churches, stately and ancient, which they had left; nor

* *Rise of Dutch Republic.* Vol. III., page 509.

† "A contract was made with John and Richard Ogden, of Stamford, for the mason-work of a stone church, seventy-two feet long, fifty wide, and sixteen high, at a cost of twenty-five hundred guilders, and a gratuity of one hundred more if the work should be satisfactory. The walls were

Address.

any of those superb civic palaces in which the Netherland cities were rich. But amid whatever straitness of poverty, amid whatever simplicity of manners, however unconscious of it themselves, they brought the immanent moral life which had made the morasses at the mouth of the Rhine the centre of a traffic more wide and lucrative, the scene of a history more majestic, than Europe before had ever seen, and the seat of the first enlightened Republic on all the circuit of its maritime coast.

To these two elements, the English and the Dutch, was added a vivid and graceful force by those who came from the fruitful Protestant provinces of France. It is sometimes forgotten that the Huguenots constituted the larger and wealthier part of the population of New Amsterdam, after the Dutch; so that La Montaigne had been in a measure associated with Kieft in the government here, as early as 1638; so that public documents, before 1664, were ordered to be printed in the French language, as well as in the Dutch. They brought with them industry, arts, refinement of letters, as well as the faithful and fervent spirit which had been infused into them in the *chambres ardentes* of their long persecutions.

They were, probably, more generally a cultivated class than were the colonists from either England or soon built; and the roof was raised, and covered by English carpenters with oak shingles, which, by exposure to the weather, soon ‘looked like slate.’”

Brodhead’s Hist. of New York. Vol. I., pp. 336-7.

Huguenot movement in France.

Holland. The Huguenot movement had begun in France, not among the poorer people, but in the capital, and in the university. The revival of letters had given it primary impulse. It was scholastic, as well as devout, and so was fitly signaled and served by the most philosophical system of theology elaborated in Europe. Its ministers were among the most learned and eloquent in that country and century of eloquent preachers. It had counted distinguished nobles in its ranks; Condé, and Coligni, among its leaders. Marguerite, Queen of Navarre, had been in her time the centre of it. It was intimately connected with the high politics of the realm. It had control of abundant wealth. The commerce of the kingdom, and its finest manufactures, were largely in the hands of those who composed the eight hundred Huguenot churches found in France in the early part of the seventeenth century.

The families of this descent who were early in New York—some of them as early as 1625—and who were afterward in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Virginia, South Carolina, brought with them thus an ancestral influence of education, refinement, and skillful enterprise, as well as of religious fidelity. The French vivacity blended in them with a quick and careful sense of duty. They brought new arts, and graceful industries, a certain chivalric and cultivated tone; while the right to freedom, in the worship of God, and in the conduct of civil affairs, was as dear to them as to any of those whose fortunes they shared. This spirit had compelled respect

Address.

in the land which they left, from those who hated it most intensely. For nearly ninety years it had made it indispensable to maintain there the edict which secured to them religious rights. When that was repealed, with the frightful dragonnades which met such ghastly retribution in the streets of Paris, a hundred years after, half-a-million of the citizens of France pushed across its guarded frontiers into voluntary exile, while the fiery spirit of those who remained blazed forth in the war of the Camisards, unextinguished among the Cevennes for twenty years.

Such an element of population was powerful, here, beyond its numbers. Its trained vitality made it efficient. It is a familiar fact that of the seven Presidents of the Continental Congress, three were of this Huguenot lineage: Boudinot, Laurens, and John Jay. Of the four commissioners who signed the provisional treaty at Paris, which assured our independence, two were of the same number: Laurens, and Jay. Faneuil, whose hall in Boston has been for more than a hundred years the rallying-place of patriotic enthusiasm, was the son of a Huguenot. Marion, the swamp-fox of Carolina, was another; Horry, another; Huger, another. It was a Huguenot voice, that of Duché, which opened with prayer the Continental Congress. It was a Huguenot hand, that of John Laurens, which drew the articles of capitulation at Yorktown. Between these two terminal acts, the brilliant and faithful bravery of the soldier had found wider imitation, among those of

The Swedish Emigration.

his lineage, than had the cowardly weakness of the preacher; and two of those, who thirty years after, in 1814, signed the treaty of peace at Ghent, were still of this remarkable stock—James Bayard, and Albert Gallatin.

Whenever the history of those who came hither from La Rochelle, and the banks of the Garonne, is fully written, the value and the vigor of the force which they imparted to the early American public life will need no demonstration.

The Swedes and Germans, who also were here, though in smaller numbers, represented the same essential temper, and were in radical harmony of spirit with those by whose side they found their place. Gustavus Vasa had given to Sweden comparative order, and initial prosperity; leaving it, at his death, with various industries, a considerable trade, and important institutions of education and religion. Gustavus Adolphus gave to the country thus partially regenerated an eminence as signal as it was brief in European affairs. A typical Northman, with his fair skin, clear gray eyes, and the golden hair which crowned his gigantic stature, he broke upon Germany in the midst of the agony of its Thirty Years' War, beat back the imperial banners from their near approach to the German Ocean, and, in two years of rapid victory, turned the entire current of the strife. He swept fortresses into his grasp, as the reaper binds his sheaves. The armies of Tilly were pulverized before him. He entered Munich

Address.

in triumph; Nuremberg and Naumburg amid a welcome that frightened him, it was so much like worship. And when he died, accidentally killed in the fog at Lützen, in 1632, he left the most signal example in modern times of heroic design, of far-sighted audacity, of the conquering force which lies in faith.

When he left Sweden he said to his chancellor: "Henceforth there remains for me no rest, except the eternal;" and it was true. But, before he left, he had not only founded a university at home, and given large impulse to industry and to commerce, but had chartered a colony for this country, with liberal provision, and an unbounded faith and hope. After his death, the great minister, Oxenstiern—most prescient and masterful of the statesmen of the time—furthered the colony, and would have built it into greatness, but for the subsequent decline of the kingdom, under the eccentric and self-willed Christina. Then it was absorbed, as you know, by the Dutch. But so far as it contributed, as to some extent it did, to the early civilized life on these shores, it simply augmented the previous forces, of personal energy, public education, constructive skill, and a free faith, for which the woods had here retired to make room; and the fact that it was planned by him whose flashing fame filled Europe with amaze, connects it with heroic memories, and casts a certain reflected splendor upon our early popular life.

The Germans, who speedily followed the Swedes,

The German Emigration.

though their large immigration was later in beginning, were of the same spirit. The war, which had covered a whole generation, in which three-fourths of the people had perished, and three-fourths of the houses had been destroyed,—which had given, as Archbishop Trench points out, the new word “plunder” to the English language,* and which had been marked by atrocities so awful that history shudders to recite them,—had not, after all, exterminated the temper at which it was aimed. It had given, as Trench has also observed, the largest contribution of any period to the Protestant hymn-book of Germany. Those who survived it, while fiercer than ever against the tyrannies which they had fought, were more eager than ever to replace the prosperities which the war had destroyed. The wilderness around them, which man had made, was less inviting than the wilderness beyond seas, which God had left for man to conquer. So they came hither; bringing with them the courage, the purpose, and the hope, which all the fire that ran along the ground, and the iron hail that had broken the branches of every tree, had only burned and beaten deeper into their minds.

They came for expanded opportunity; for liberty of development, and the chance of a more rewarding

* “This War has left a very characteristic deposite in our language, in the word ‘plunder,’ which first appeared in English about the year 1642-3, having been brought hither from Germany by some of the many Scotch and English who had served therein; for so Fuller assures us.”

Lect. on “Social Aspects of the Thirty Years’ War.”

Address.

work. Wherever they touched the American coast they set the seeds of that new civilization which had found in Germany its early incentives, and for which they and their fathers had fought, through a strife without precedent in severity and in length.

The same was true of the Scotch and Scotch-Irish, who came in rapidly increasing numbers after the close of the seventeenth century. The Earl of Stirling had received, by royal charter, as early as 1621, a grant of the territory still known to the world as "Nova Scotia," and had subsequently sent some colonists to its shores; but the small settlement soon disappeared, and those who afterward emigrated from Scotland, for many years, were inclined to seek homes in the north of Ireland, rather than on these distant coasts. The comparatively few families from the lowland shires, who had come hither before 1664, had mingled inseparably with the English emigrants, whom they closely resembled, and are scarcely to be discriminated from them.*

The four or five hundred Scotch prisoners whom Cromwell sent to Boston, in 1651, after the battles of Dunbar and Worcester, were, of course, discontented in their involuntary exile, and appear to have left no

* "The population of Scotland (1603), with the exception of the Celtic tribes which were thinly scattered over the Hebrides, and over the mountainous parts of the northern shires, was of the same blood with the population of England, and spoke a tongue which did not differ from the purest English more than the dialects of Somersetshire and Lancashire differed from each other."

Macaulay, History of England, vol. I, page 65.

The Scotch-Irish Emigration.

permanent impression on the unfolding life of the colonies. When Robert Barclay, of Ury, was governor of New Jersey, in 1683, he secured the emigration of numbers of his countrymen to that attractive and fertile province, though, it is said, "with some difficulty and importunity. For, although the great bulk of the nation was suffering the rigors of tyranny, for their resistance to the establishment of prelacy, they were reluctant to seek relief in exile from their native land." *

But when the hundred and twenty families came, in 1719, to Boston, Portland, and elsewhere, the ancestors of whom, a century before, had emigrated from Argyleshire to Londonderry and Antrim in the north of Ireland, and by part of whom Londonderry, in New Hampshire, was speedily settled,—and when others followed, as to Georgia in 1736, to North Carolina in 1746, to South Carolina in 1763,—they came to stay. They changed their skies, but not their minds. They brought the exact and stern fidelity to religious conviction, the national pride, the hatred of tyranny, the frugal, hardy, courageous temper which were to them an ancestral inheritance. Their strong idiosyncrasy maintained itself stubbornly, but their practical spirit was essentially in harmony with that of the colonists who had preceded them; and when the hour of summons came, no voices were earlier or more emphatic for dissolving all connection with Great Britain than

* Gordon's History of New Jersey, chap. IV.

Address.

were those of the men whose ancestors, in 1638, had eagerly signed the “National Covenant” in the Greyfriars’ church-yard, or forty years afterward had faced Claverhouse and his dragoons at Loudon-hill, or Monmouth and his troops at Bothwell-bridge.

So, also, the Bohemian protestants, who were here in 1656; the Waldenses, who were on Staten Island and elsewhere in the same year; the German quakers, by whom Germantown, in Pennsylvania, was settled, in 1684; the three thousand Germans, sent out to the Hudson River in 1710, and who afterward established their prosperous homes at Schoharie, and along the inviting Mohawk meadows; the Salzburg exiles, who had crossed Europe from Augsburg “singing psalms,” and who finally found a home in Georgia, in 1734:—all were essentially similar in spirit, industrious, orderly, devout, faithful to their religion, with a resolute purpose to live and work in unhindered freedom. Each small migration added its increment to the swelling force of the various but sympathetic population of the colonies. Each element had its separate value, its proper strength; and all were ready, when the final fires of war broke forth, to combine with each other, as the many metals, fused together and intimately commingling, were wrought into one magnificent amalgam, in the famous and precious Corinthian brass.

Even the rough and rapid outline of this fragmentary review illustrates the extent to which the century

The Nation commenced.

passing so signally over Europe impressed its character on this continent. Twenty-five years after New Amsterdam had been submitted to the English, at least two hundred thousand Europeans are computed to have had their home in this country, representing, for the most part, the several peoples which I have named. The future Nation was then fully commenced. It had only thenceforth to work, and grow. It was formed of plain people. Its wealth was small, and its culture not great. It had been hardly noticed, at first, amid the swift changes of states and dynasties with which Europe was dazzled. But the forces which it contained represented an illustrious ancestry. It is no exaggeration to say that the most energetic life of the world, up to that era, was reproduced in it. We have thought of it, too commonly, as composed of men who had simply come here in zeal for an opinion, or to escape the fierce inquest of tyranny. It was a broader temper which brought them, an ampler purpose which they came to serve. The push of a century was behind them ; eager, aggressive, sweeping out to new conquests on unknown coasts. It had seen such changes in Northern Europe as only its vehement energy could have wrought ; and now, with seemingly careless hand, using the impulse of various motives, it had flung into space a separate people, infused with its temper, alive with its force.

In its constituent moral life, that people was one, though gradually formed, and drawn from regions so

Address.

remote. It was fearless, reflective, energetic, constructive, by its birthright; at once industrious and martial; intensely practical, politically active, religiously free. There was, almost, a monotony o' force in it. It accepted no hereditary leaders, and kept those whom it elected within careful limitations. It gave small promise of esthetic sensibility, with the dainty touch of artistic taste; but it showed from the outset a swift and far-sighted common-sense. It was vital with expectation; having the strongest ancestral attachments, yet attracted by the Future more than by the Past, and always looking to new success and larger work. It was hospitable, of course, to all new comers, giving reception in New England, as well as here, to even the Jesuit and his mass; * but it absorbed only what harmonized with it, was indifferent to the rest. It was sensible of God, and His providence over it; but entirely aware of the value of possessions, and profoundly resolved to have the power which they impart. It was the heir to a great Past. It had before it the perilous uncertainties of an obscure Future. But any philosopher, considering it at that point, with a mind as intent and reflective as Burke's, would have said, I think, without hesitation, that its Future must respond to the long preparation; that the times before it must match the times out of which it had come, and take impress from the lands whose tongues and temper it combined. If that strong stock, selected from so

* See Parkman's "Jesuits of North America," pp. 322-327.

The Training of the Nation.

many peoples, and transferred to this continent at that critical time, was not destined thenceforth to grow, till the little one became a thousand, and the small one a strong nation, there is no province for anticipation in public affairs, and "the philosophy of history" is a phrase without meaning.

The after-training which met it here was precisely such, you instantly observe, as befitted its origin, and carried on the development which was prophesied in its nature. It was an austere, protracted training; not beautiful, but beneficent; of labor, patience, legislation, war. As the colonies had been planted according to the wise maxim of Bacon—"the people wherewith you plant ought to be gardeners, ploughmen, laborers, smiths, carpenters, joiners, fishermen, fowlers, with some few apothecaries, surgeons, cooks, and bakers,"*—so they were trained for practical service, for long endurance, for the arts of industry not of beauty, for ultimate oneness as a Nation, and a powerful impression upon mankind.

Incessant labor was their primary teacher; universal in its demands, in effect most salutary. If they had been idle men, supplied with abundant resources from abroad, a something mystical and dark would have penetrated their spirit, from the pathless forests which stretched around, from the lonely seas which lay behind, from the fierceness of the elements, from their sense of dislocation from all familiar historic lands. There

* Essay xxxiii. ; "of Plantations."

Address.

was, in fact, something of this. Certain passages in their history, certain parts of their writings, are only explained by it. It would have been general, and have wrought a sure public decline, except for the constant corrective of their labor. They would have seen, oftener than they did, phantom armies fighting in the clouds, fateful omens in aurora and comet.* The dread of witchcraft, still prevalent in the old world, would more widely have fevered their minds. The voice of demons would have oftener been heard, in the howl of wolves, or the winds wailing among the pines. But the sweat of their brows medicined their minds. The work which was set for them was too difficult and vast to allow such tendencies to get domination.

A continent was before them to be subdued, and with few and poor instruments. With axe and hoe, mattock and plough, they were to conquer an undefined wilderness, untouched, till then, by civilized industry; with no land behind to which to retreat, with only the ocean and the sand-hills in the rear.

It was a tremendous undertaking; greater than any

* "The Aurora Borealis, the beauty of the northern sky, which is now gazed upon with so much delight, was seen for the first time in New England in 1721, and filled the inhabitants with alarm. Superstition beheld with terror its scarlet hues, and transformed its waving folds of light, moving like banners along the sky, into harbingers of coming judgment, and omens of impending havoc. Under its brilliant reflection, the snow, the trees, and every object, seemed to be dyed with blood, and glowed like fire."

The Continent to be subdued.

infant people had ever encountered ; greater, fortunately, than they themselves knew at the time. Plutarch tells us that Stasicrates once proposed to Alexander to have Mount Athos carved into a statue of himself ; a copious river flowing from one hand, and a city of thousands of people in the other ; the Ægean archipelago stretching outward from the feet. Even the ambition which decreed Alexandria, and made Asia its vassal, might have pleased itself with a fancy so colossal. But it was trifling, compared with the work which the colonists of this country were called to take up ; as a Macedonian bay, compared with the ocean on which their rugged continent looked. Upon that continent they were to impress the likeness of themselves. What Europe had only partially realized, after its centuries of advancing civilization, they and their children were suddenly to repeat, fashioning the wilderness to the home of commonwealths.

The strain of the work was prodigious and unceasing. No wonder that the applications of science have always had a charm for Americans ! No wonder that "impossible" has ever since seemed here a foolish word ! But the muscle which was built, in both body and will, was as tough and tenacious as the work was enormous.

They had to secure,—by invention, where English policy permitted, by purchase, where it did not,—whatever they needed for the comfort of life, and whatever means of culture they possessed. Their fisheries were

Address.

pushed along the jagged, tempestuous coasts, till they struck the icy barriers of the pole. Their commerce was cultivated, against the jealousy of the English legislation, till, in Burke's time, you see to what it had grown. They had to establish their own free schools ; to found and enlarge their needed colleges ; to supply themselves with such literature at home as could be produced, in the pauses of their prodigious labor ; to import from the old world what their small means enabled them to buy.

They had their chartered liberties to maintain, against Royal hostility, in the face of governors who hindered and threatened, if they did not—like Andros—compel the clerks of their assemblies to write “Finis” midway on the records.* So it happened to them, according to Milton's ideal plan for a perfect education. “The next remove,” he says, “must be to the study of politics ; to know the beginning, end, and reason of political societies ; that they may not, in a dangerous fit of the Commonwealth, be such poor, shaken, uncertain reeds, of such a tottering conscience, as many of our great counselors have lately showed themselves, but steadfast pillars of the State.” The plain men who had come here from Europe, and who had before them a

* “His Excellency, Sir Edmund Andros, Knight, Captain-General and Governor of his Majesty's Territory and Dominion in New England, by order from his Majesty, King of England, Scotland, and Ireland, the 31st of October, 1687, took into his hands the government of this colony of Connecticut, it being by his Majesty annexed to the Massachusetts and other Colonies, under his Excellency's government. FINIS.”

Secretary's Allyn's record ; quoted by Palfrey, vol. 3, p. 545.

Military training of the Colonists.

wilderness to be conquered, were trained according to this generous philosophy. A large practical sovereignty had to be in their hands, from the beginning, for their self-preservation. They established offices, enacted laws, organized a militia, waged war, coined money ; and the lessons which they learned, of legislative prudence, administrative skill, bore abundant fruit in that final Revolution which did not spring from accident or from passion, which was born of debate, which was shaped by ideas, and which vindicated itself by majestic State-papers.

Their military tuition was as constant as their work. Against the Indians, against the French, somewhere or other, as we look back, they seem to have been always in arms—so uncertain and brief were their intervals of peace. Not always threatened violence to themselves, sometimes the remote collisions and entanglements of European politics, involved them in these wars—as in that great one which commenced in the question of the Austrian Succession, and which swept through our untrodden woods its trail of fire ; when, as Macaulay says of Frederick, “that he might rob a neighbor whom he had promised to defend, black men fought on the coasts of Coromandel, and red men scalped each other by the great lakes of North America.” Precisely as the colonies grew, any power hostile to Great Britain was incited to attack them. At some point or other, therefore, the straggling and interrupted line of their scanty possessions was

Address.

lighted with conflagration, vocal with volleys, dripping with blood, down almost to the day of the Revolution.

But from this incessant martial training came practised skill in the use of weapons, a cool courage, a supreme self-reliance,—the temper which looks from many portraits, which faced emergencies without a fear, and whose fire withered the British ranks at Concord-bridge and on Breed's-hill.

There is not much that is picturesque in the annals which cover the hundred years after New Amsterdam became New York. They look, to the world, perhaps to us, for the most part, common-place. Volcanic regions are the more picturesque in landscape forms, because of the sudden violence of the forces which have shattered and reset them. The legends cling to rugged peaks. The pinnacles of Pilatus incessantly attract them, while they slide from the smoother slopes of Righi. So a convulsive and violent history, full of reäction, fracture, catastrophe, appeals to the imagination as one never does that is quiet and gradual, where a people moves forward in steady advance, and the sum of its accomplishment is gradually built of many particulars. There was not much in the career of the colonists, in the hundred years before the Revolution, which poetry would be moved to celebrate, or whose attractive pictorial aspects the painter would make haste to sketch.

But the discipline answered its purpose better than

The severe Discipline salutary.

if it had been pictorial, tragic. It was apt to the in-born temper of the colonists. It fortified in them that hardy and resolute moral life which they had brought. It guarded the forces which were their birth-right from waste and loss. The colony of Surinam, under tropical skies—where mahogany was a firewood, and the Tonquin-bean, with its swift sweetness, perfumed the air; where sugar and spices are produced without limit, and coffee and cotton have returned to the planter two crops a year—this seemed, at the time, a prodigal recompense for the colony of New Netherland. But Guiana demoralized the men who possessed it; while the harder work, under harsher heavens, gave an empire to those who adhered to these coasts. No unbought luxuries became to them as dazzling and deadly Sabine gifts. No lazy and voluptuous life, as of tropical islands, dissolved their manhood. Their little wealth was wrested from the wilderness, or won from the seas; and the cost of its acquirement measured its permanence. They were, as a people, honest and chaste, because they were workers. Their ways might be rough, their slang perhaps strong. But no prevalence among them of a prurient fiction inflamed their passions; no fescennine plays blanched the bloom of their modesty. Their discipline was Spartan, not Athenian; but it made their life robust and sound. The sharp hellebore cleansed their heads for a more discerning practical sense. They never had to meet what Carlyle declares the present practi-

Address.

cal problem of governments : “ given, a world of knaves, to educe an honesty from their united action.”

As their numbers increased, and their industry became various, the sense of independence on foreign countries was constantly nurtured. The feeling of inward likeness and sympathy among themselves, the tendencies to combine in an organic union, grew always more earnest. Patriotism was intensified into a passion ; since, if any people owned their lands, certainly they did, who had hewn out their spaces amid the woods, had purchased them not with wampum but with work, had fertilized them with their own blood. And, at last, trained by labor and by war, by educational influences, Christian teachings, legislative responsibilities, commercial success,—at last, the spirit which they had brought, which in Europe had been resisted and thwarted until its force was largely broken, but which here had not died, and had not declined, but had continued diffused as a common life among them all,—this made their separate establishment in the world a necessity of the time. “ Monarchy unaccountable is the worst sort of tyranny, and least of all to be endured by free-born men ”—that was a maxim of Aristotle’s politics, twenty centuries before their Congress. It had been repeated and emphasized by Milton, while the ancestors of those assembled in the Congress were fighting for freedom across the seas.* Holland had believed it,

* Milton had added other words, in the same great discourse of Lib-
68

The fruit of the American Spirit.

and protestant Germany, as well as England. It became the vivid and illuminating conviction of the people here gathered; and in its light the Republic dawned. The fore-gleams of that were playing already along the horizon, while Burke was speaking. Before his words had reached this country, the small red rim was palpable on the eastern sky, showing the irresistible up-spring of that effulgent yet temperate day which never since has ceased to shine.

All this was the work of that early distinctive American Spirit, so rich in its history, so manifold in its sources, so supreme in its force. It had not been born of sudden passion. It was not the creature of one school of theology. It had had no narrow insular origin. It was richer and broader than Burke himself discerned it to be. Holland and France, as well as England, had contributed to it. From the age of Elizabeth, and of William the Silent, of Henry Fourth and Gustavus Adolphus, it had burst forth upon these shores. It had here been working for a century and a half, before the Stamp Act. It had wrought in

erty, which might have served as a motto for the Congress convened at Philadelphia, just a hundred years after his death :

“ And surely they that shall boast, as we do, to be a free nation, and not to have in themselves the power to remove or to abolish any governor, supreme or subordinate, with the government itself upon urgent causes, may please their fancy with a ridiculous and painted freedom, fit to cozen babies, but are indeed under tyranny and servitude, as wanting that power which is the root and source of all liberty, to dispose and economize in the land which God hath given them, as masters of family in their own house and free inheritance.”

The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates.

Address.

Europe for three generations, before the first hemlock hut sheltered a white face between Plymouth and Jamestown. It had been born of vehement struggle, vast endurance, sublime aspiration, heroic achievement: and on this reserved continent of the future God gave it room, incentive, training. Assault did not destroy it here. Reaction did not waste it. It flourished more royally, because transplanted. At last it sent back of its inherent, perennial life, to revive the lands from which at the outset it had come.

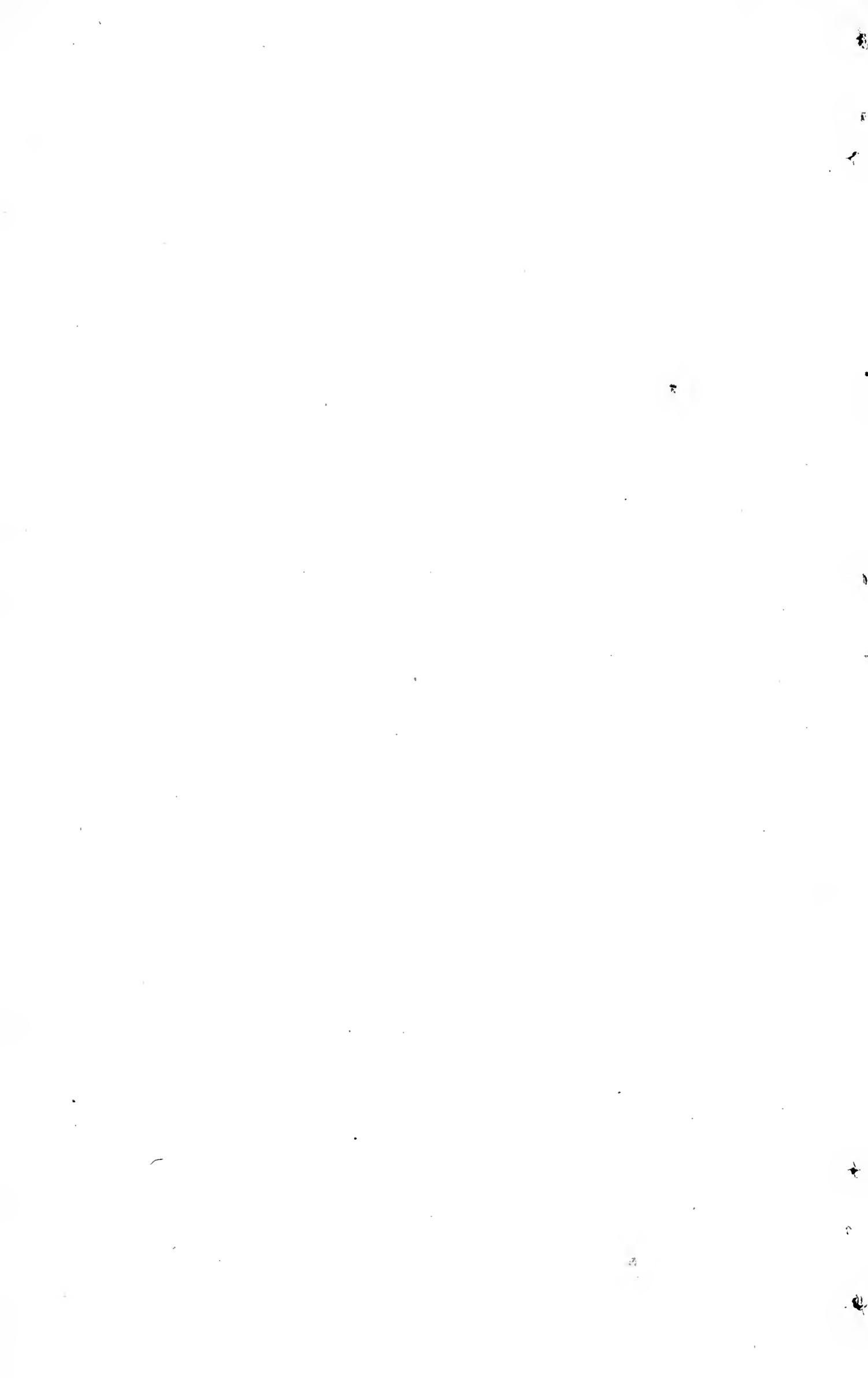
The work of that spirit is what we inherit. It was that which got its coveted relief from paying thrpence a pound upon tea, by erecting another empire in the world. It was that which counseled, wrought, and fought, from the first Congress to the last capitulation. It is that which every succeeding reminiscence, in the coming crowded centennial years, will constantly recall. It is that which interlinks our annals with those of the noblest time in Europe, and makes us heirs to the greatness of its history. It is that which shows the providence of Him who is the eternal Master-builder of states and peoples, and the reach of whose plan runs through the ages!

The patriot's duty, the scholar's mission, the philanthropist's hope, are illustrated by it. For as long as this spirit survives among us, uncorrupted by luxury, unabated by time, no matter what the strife of parties, no matter what the commercial reverse, institutions which express it will be permanent here as the moun-

May it be enduring!

tains and the stars. When this shall fail, if fail it does, it will not need a foreign foe, it will not ask domestic strife, to destroy our liberties. Of themselves they will fall; as the costly column, whose base has rotted; as the mighty frame, whose life has gone!

May He who brought it, still maintain it:—that when others are gathered here, a hundred years hence, to review the annals not yet written, they may have only to trace the unfolding of its complete and sovereign life!



PROCEEDINGS.

AT a special meeting of the NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY, held in the Academy of Music, in the City of New York, on Thursday evening, April 15th, 1875, to celebrate the Seventieth Anniversary of the Founding of the Society :

The proceedings were opened with prayer by the Rev. THOMAS E. VERMILYE, D.D., LL.D., senior minister of the Collegiate Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of this City.

The Anniversary Address was then delivered by the Rev. RICHARD S. STORRS, D.D., LL.D.

Upon the conclusion of the address, Mr. WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT rose and said :

“LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: The profound silence with which you have listened to the honorable speaker attests your interest in the subject, and the ability with which it has been delivered. The orator has well expounded to you the manner in which the spirit, out of which our free institution first had its origin, penetrated the hearts of the people, how it was carried into full effect in the institution under which it is our good fortune to live. While his voice is yet ringing in your ears, while his brilliant periods yet give forth their music in your memory, I will not attempt to say anything upon the subject. I will only present a resolution which I am sure you will all agree to with perfect unanimity :

“*Resolved*, That the thanks of this Society be presented to the Rev. Dr. STORRS for his able, eloquent and instructive discourse delivered this evening, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.”

This resolution was then seconded by Mr. WILLIAM M. EVARTS in the following words :

“MR. PRESIDENT: It gives me great pleasure to second the resolution which Mr. BRYANT has so fitly offered, and

Proceedings.

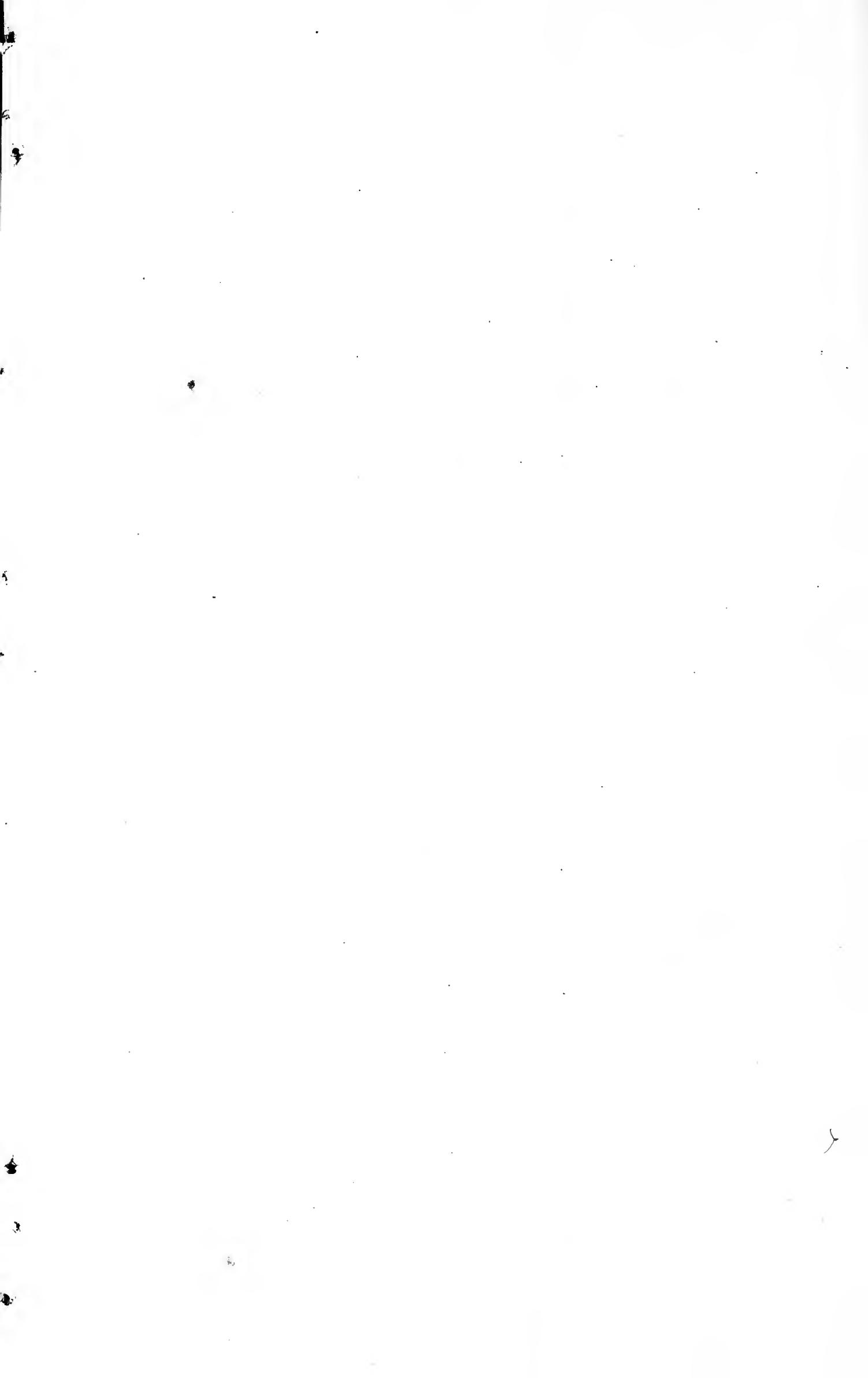
in doing so I feel that I express not only the unanimous sentiment of the members of our Society, but the general judgment of this large and cultivated audience, who with rapt attention have now been alternately instructed by the learning and charmed by the eloquence of the orator. He, indeed, has shown us, in the rapid and comprehensive survey that he has given us of our origin, how we came to be the great nation that we conceive ourselves this day to be; that these communities had^t their infancy from a great parentage, and were born at an illustrious time. Your Society, among its great services, has been in none more fortunate than in the contributions to the literature and the learning of the times which, in the long and distinguished list of your orators, are inscribed in the memory of the people. But in none have you been more fortunate than to-night, and none of your orators have been more fortunate than he in the appropriateness to the times of which they spoke, and in what they produced for our consideration. What fitter prologue and preparation for the eloquence which is to illustrate the successive events of history in this centennial period, than this your Society's orator and his oration?"

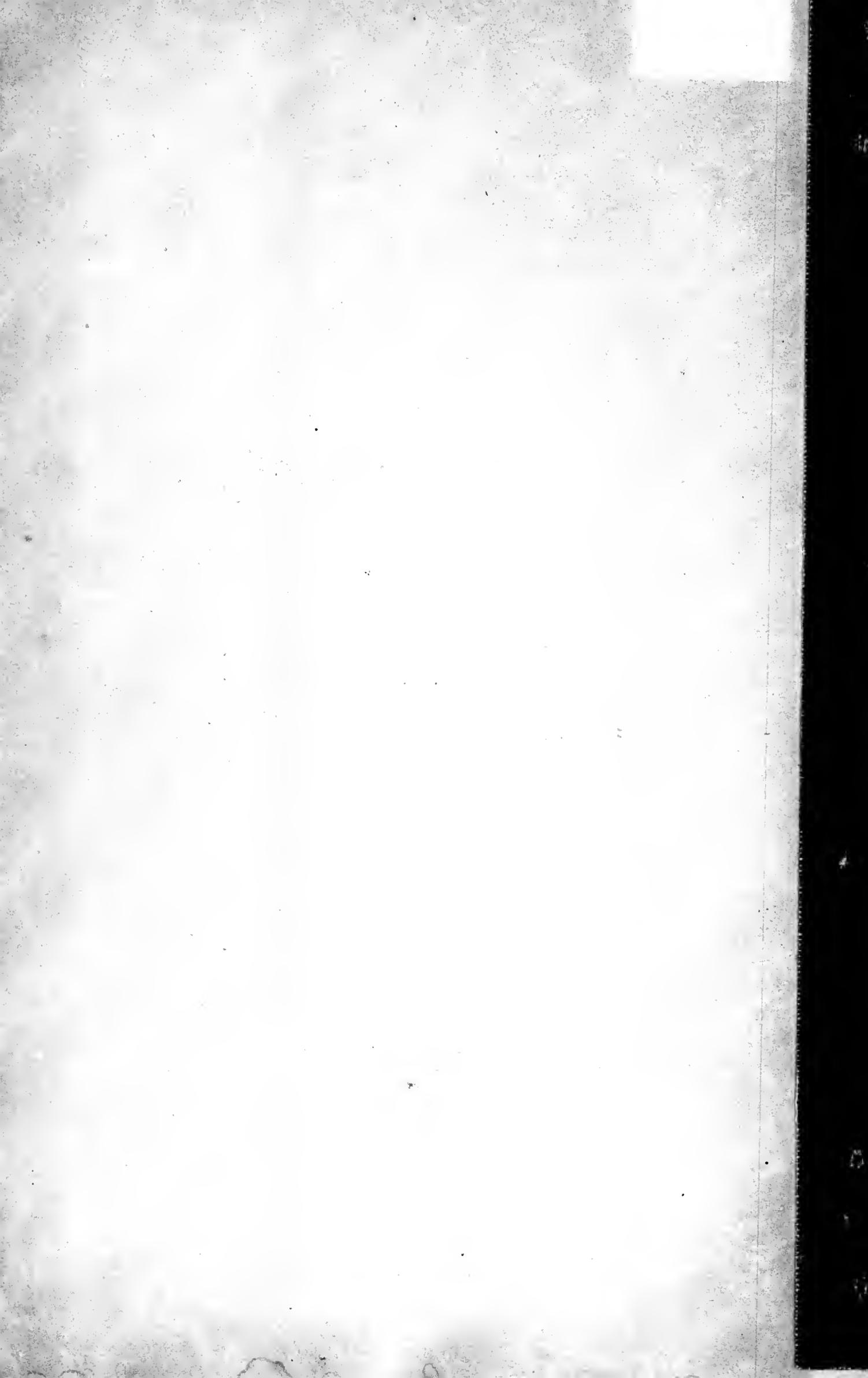
The resolution was adopted unanimously, and the benediction having been pronounced by the Rev. WILLIAM ADAMS, D.D., LL.D., the Society adjourned.

Extract from the minutes, etc.

ANDREW WARNER,

Recording Secretary.





Gaylord Bros. Inc.
Makers
Syracuse, N. Y.

**END O
TITLE**

7